

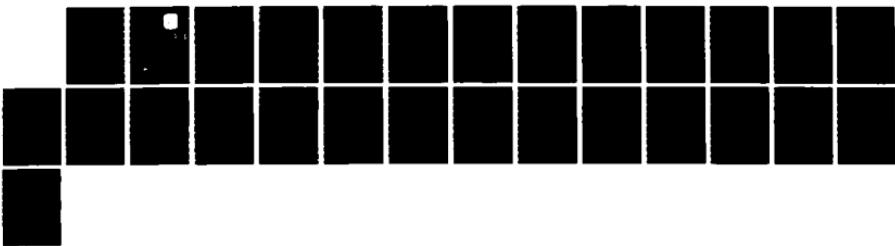
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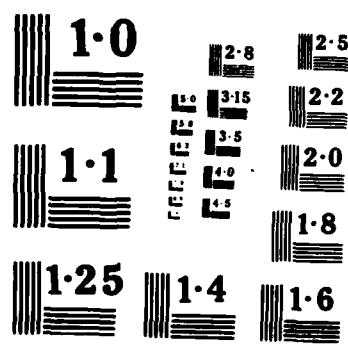
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STUDY  
PROJECT

SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY

BY

BG MOHAMMED KALAM AZAD

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However, the economics of many of the states of Southeast Asia, particularly those in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), have been growing remarkably well for the last 15 years; they have registered growth rates of 5 to 10 percent annually. The region provides many vital and strategic natural resources for the world market, such as tin, rubber, rice, palm oil, timber, bauxite, copper, and, to a lesser extent, gas and oil.

Southeast Asia also straddles the vital sea lines of communication (SLOC) between northeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. The importance of this sea lane is becoming more pronounced with the increased presence of the Soviet Navy at Cam Ranh Bay and the Japanese and Korean dependence on Middle East oil. The political upheaval in the Philippines and the possible loss of the bases at Subic and Clark by the United States (US) necessitate a more urgent look at the stability and security in Southeast Asia, particularly the littoral states adjacent to the SLOCs.

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SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY

BY

BG MOHAMMED KALAM AZAD

INTERNATIONAL FELLOW

FROM

MALAYSIA

MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

FOR

THE UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE

1986

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## SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY

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## SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY

### INTRODUCTION

The political transition in the Republic of the Philippines must be seen by those living away from Southeast Asia as typical of the instability of the region. Since WW II, this has, indeed, been the case. Taking center stage are the wars in Indochina, the attempted coup by the Communist Party in Indonesia, the Communist insurgency in Malaya and the Philippines, the many coups in Thailand, the military "confrontation" by Indonesia with Malaysia, and the Brunei rebellion.

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### AIM

The aim of this paper is to examine the security situation in Southeast Asia and suggest possible developments in the near term. Particular emphasis is given to the ASEAN states.

### SOUTHEAST ASIAN SECURITY HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis is that a deterioration of the internal security stability enhances the external threat the country faces. To understand how the internal and external security relate to each other involves an appreciation of the political, economic, social, cultural, ideological, and not necessarily the military dimension, as is commonly found.

The region is fragmented by thousands of islands, divided into small countries, populated by more people than it can manage, hampered by the lack of basic infrastructure, and exposed to the most modern forms of mass media. This situation propagates security problems originating from within the respective countries. Overcoming such a threat is dependent on the ability of the government to meet the rising demands and expectations of the population. This requires the government to carry out development programs that will raise the living standards of the people while, at the same time, retaining its cultural identity and social justice. This is, at best, an extremely difficult task to accomplish, more so when the regional security situation demands the diversion of scarce resources and effort.

### INTERNAL PROBLEMS

This paper intends to cover the subject of Southeast Asia as a region, as opposed to analyzing an individual country in turn. Where appropriate, individual cases will be highlighted. It is appreciated that each of the countries have their own history, culture, national character, and development; Malaysia and Singapore were previously British colonies, the Philippines was under Spanish and US rules, Indonesia was a Dutch colony, and Indochina went through Chinese, French and US hands. Granting these differences, there are a number of similar problems which they face:

1. In carrying out their national development programs, the population's experience changes in their cultural values. Such programs do not benefit all across the board; inescapably there is uneven distribution of wealth.
2. Political, social, economic, and cultural changes present problems of unity of the nation and state.
3. The development of the political process in uniformity with economic development as well as improvements in social justice.
4. The succession of power.

### NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The expectations of the people in the region are extremely high. This has come about through the access they enjoy to the mass media. The transistor radio has made it possible for the displaced illiterate to know exactly what is going on in the world and what he should expect to get from the promises given by politicians; worse, he knows what he can do if these promises are not delivered. One need only watch the recent incident in the Philippines to appreciate this. Thus, the government has to plan, execute, and sustain development programs; and these programs must show results both in the short and long term. The people of Singapore are willing to accept extremely harsh,

if not ruthless, methods used by the Lee Kuan Yew government, because they have seen the many excellent results and progress the government was able to achieve. On the other hand, the people of the Philippines rebelled against Marcos, because he was not able to meet the expectations of the people; indeed, Marcos enriched himself and took care only of those who ardently supported him.

In the last 15 years, these countries have been able to achieve high growth rates of between 5 to 10 percent annually in their economic development. However, their economies are dependent on the international economy. Thailand and the Philippines are dependent completely on imported energy resources; increases in the price of oil cause tremendous difficulties in meeting their planned economic objectives. The economies of these countries are also tied to the export of raw materials; increases in the price of oil cause a corresponding decrease in the price of these commodities as importers wrestle with the problem of recession. Such price fluctuations result in major social tragedies for the many people tied to these labor intensive industries. It can also be said that there is room for optimism as these countries are blessed with an abundance of national resources and that, in the long run, these economies will survive. More needs to be said about the way these economies are managed, as this is within the realm of their control. The Philippines and Indonesia demonstrate a complete lack of proper management of their economies. The Philippines is on the brink of bankruptcy and Indonesia, with potentially rich natural resources, is riddled with corruption, overpopulation, and mismanagement. Only because poverty has been a way of life, the country has not seen a rebellion on the scale recently seen in the Philippines.

However, it may be said that it is easier to maintain the economic growth rate, as to a point, it is within the "control" of the government, than having to overcome the decadence and side effects from the very successes of the economic development itself.

In all of Southeast Asia, particularly in the democracies, there is a tremendous problem of acculturation. Development has brought with it a confusion of cultures. The manifestation of this was seen in the streets of Saigon in the late 60s and in Manila recently. The population has to evolve within one generation from primitive cultures to sophisticated Western values. television, video, film, radio, magazines, and the newspaper have made it possible for people in both urban and rural areas to see how the other side lives. Large sections of the population are affected by this exposure, while many others remain tied to old cultural values. Increasingly, we also begin to see a more active influence being played by religious bodies. This interaction of cultures creates a confusion of values, and the people become extremely insecure and vulnerable to subversion. Historians, on the other hand, will argue that Southeast Asia has, throughout history, been grappling with similar problems, vis-a-vis the coming of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity, and has come out of it with greater strength.

If development introduced western culture, this, in effect, results in "explosion of demands, demonstrative consumption patterns, and inequalities in the distribution of income." It may be said that such an outcome is inherent in the free enterprise system. Unfortunately, to satisfy these needs some opportunistic officials, in their greed, resort to corruption; and corruption is the cancer that eats into the body-politic of Southeast Asia.

The governments have introduced measures to overcome this problem. Some of the ways are:

1. Suppress consumption pattern by punitive taxation, particularly on luxury items such as expensive cars.
2. Fight corruption through the setting up of anti-corruption agencies where reports of such practices may be made and investigations instituted.
3. Suppress advertising in the media.
4. Improve public education, public health, and public housing, particularly for the low income group.

#### NATIONAL UNITY

Southeast Asia, when studied from this distance, tends to look like it is populated by one group of people commonly referred to as the "Orientals." It is, however, made up of many ethnic groups. In the first place, each of the countries have large overseas Chinese populations. These countries have diverse ethnic tribes. Indians also populate them in reasonable numbers. To complicate the matter, large sections of the population hold dearly to many different faiths. There are as many Muslims as there are Buddhists in the area; and in the Philippines, Catholicism dominates. Unfortunately, we are beginning to see an increasing involvement of religious bodies in politics today.

Malaysia has a serious racial problem, particularly between the Malay and Chinese; a similar problem exists in Indonesia. The Philippines has a racial and religious problem between the Catholic Filipino and the Muslim Moros in the south.

The process of national unity becomes extremely difficult to achieve. Steps are being taken to overcome this problem. Some of these steps are:

1. A common national language
2. Observance of the flag and anthem
3. Eradication of poverty
4. Restructure society by eradicating identification of employment by racial groups.
5. A greater emphasis in sports as a vehicle for unity.
6. A truly representative military force, particularly with the system of compulsory service.

#### NATIONAL PARTICIPATION

Many Westerners are quick to point an accusing finger at Southeast Asia for the lack of "proper" democratic systems. They point at the lack of freedom of speech and writing. Human rights violations seem to be the common turf of developing countries. Yet, Southeast Asia really woke its political head when it saw the powerful western war machine defeated by the Japanese in the last war. Politicisation of Southeast Asia was born and is yet to achieve maturity. It stands in some places and tumbles at others. However, this political development has, for the first time, given the people a greater sense of participation. The political process allows them to be involved in policy-making and to have influence in the direction the country takes. At the same time, this participation also gives the government greater support for the development programs being instituted.

As the country develops and progresses, so will the demands of the people. It is not enough to meet just pure monetary needs alone. The people look for a genuine rule of law, greater political participation, and a wide spectrum of human and civil rights. All of these are glaringly and amply demonstrated by the people of the Philippines. But this does not mean that one can immediately accept the Western model and values although it would

superficially seem that way. There are many inadequacies and constraints in education, political inactivity, funds, and infrastructure that will disallow the adoption of such models. Iran has shown that if Western values are forced upon the people before they are ready to accept them, a violent upheaval will result.

However, the progressive implementation of political reform is a constructive and healthy development and a useful mechanism to overcome the side effects of development mentioned earlier. Attention should be given to develop the representation that could be made by unions, social organizations, the mass media, students, intellectuals, etc.

The negative side effects of development and progress can be overcome by developing national participation through the gradual improvements in the political process. The important thing here is to maintain a constant balance. If one is out of step with the other, the people will be quick to demonstrate their insecurity. It will be seen how critical it is to get a government that has the right objectives and the capabilities to plan and implement such programs; and, yet, at the same time, the whole situation is volatile and sensitive to the most minor of outside influences. It will be seen from this why so many Southeast Asian politicians are extremely impatient with Westerners who make unstudied comments that create a climate of dissension for even the noblest of reasons.

#### SUCCESSION OF POWER

The Philippines is a perfect example of the problem of succession of power. It must, however, be said that, given wisdom, sincerity, and good advice, there are many reasons why having Marcos as President for 20 years could be the best thing for the Philippines. In a democratic system, one

could expect a change of administration every five years. The Philippines, with its 7,000 islands and 40 million people dispersed without easy access or basic infrastructure, could not possibly have benefited from a long-term development plan or by a five yearly change of government. Marcos was disposed to the most ideal opportunity to provide for the development of the country. However, a little power corrupts; and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This problem of succession of power can be overcome by an efficient civil service. The Philippines, as in many developing countries, lacks an efficient civil service that can provide the continuity regardless of who is in power. On the contrary, many governments are run on the whim of the leader; and he very often exercises that whim with little regard for the well being of the population. It can also be said that in some countries the leadership has orbited around a select few upper class or the military leadership, as in Thailand. While "democracy" is said to be practiced, the problem of succession continues; Mr. Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore is currently the world's longest serving Prime Minister.

#### ROLE OF THE MILITARY

The military has played a major role in Southeast Asia. In Indonesia and the Philippines, it has been involved in nation-building. However, scant resources, corruption, and difficult communication have made it difficult for the military to bring about a major social change. In all of Southeast Asia, the military has been tasked to maintain internal security and preserve law and order. In varying degrees, they have conducted themselves well; but, the military remains an instrument of policy and cannot by itself carry out the reforms that will ensure internal stability requiring political solutions.

This is as it should be; however, having said that, the military has played a dominant role in politics more perhaps because it is well organized, well structured, and being under arms, has the power.

#### EXTERNAL PROBLEMS

The external threat equation to Southeast Asia arises from the Sino-Soviet conflict. Both these countries will try to increase their sphere of influence in the area through their proxies. Vietnam signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union in 1978. This places Vietnam in conflict with China; and, at the same time, the Soviets have made extensive naval use of the port facilities at Cam Rahn Bay and Danang. China was willing to commit troops against Vietnam in support of Thailand when Vietnam conducted raids near Aranyaprathet in northeastern Thailand. China has been vocal in showing her support of Thailand and has, on more than one occasion, threatened to "teach Vietnam a lesson" if Vietnamese forces cross into Thailand. However, it needs to be mentioned that insurgent forces in Thailand, and Malaysia to the south, are pro-Chinese. This in itself may backfire on Thailand in its relationship with China. On the other hand, pro-Chinese insurgents do not welcome pro-Soviet Vietnam in Thailand.

To place the external threat picture in perspective, the immediate threat to Southeast Asia must be Vietnam. Thailand is the front line state. However, it would seem unlikely at this point that Vietnam will invade Thailand. This is because she is now preoccupied in consolidating her hold on Cambodia. There are reports that Vietnam is settling her people in Cambodia. The Vietnamese economy is in shambles, and she is heavily indebted to the Soviets. The logistical line of communication to Thailand is so long that it

is unlikely that Vietnam will, in the short-term, conduct such an adventure. Logic will have it that the Vietnamese leadership should consolidate and develop its own economy after the severe devastation of the war.

However, Vietnam could affect the stability of Thailand if, in a hot-pursuit action against tripartite coalition forces of Heng Samrin, Pol Pot, and Sihanouk, it is confronted with Thai forces. The Vietnamese have shown that under such circumstances it will occupy certain parts of Thailand. Such a situation can destabilize the government of Thailand if it demonstrates its inability to react positively against such incursions. Thai politics is so volatile that it does not take much to destabilize the government.

At the same time, Vietnam can also destabilize Thailand by forcing more refugees to move into Thai territory. Thailand has been burdened by large numbers of refugees for the last eight years.

In general terms, China has counterbalanced the Vietnamese threat to Thailand and Malaysia, and this is appreciated. However, it may also be true that China played a decisive role in placing Vietnam deeply into the hands of the Soviets and, thus, further entrenched the Soviet-anchor in Vietnam. The Sino-Vietnamese conflict may necessitate the involvement of the Soviet Union which will bring about greater US presence. This will expand the area of conflict to the whole of the east Asia region. This scenario has already materialized. The Sino-Vietnamese conflict has brought a major Soviet force into Vietnam. The Soviet presence threatens the Japanese and Korean SLOCs, and this situation has made the US bases at Subic and Clark critical. Unless Japan or a combination of a Sino-Japanese alliance can counterbalance this Soviet presence, increased US military presence in the area should be expected. The point is, it has made Southeast Asia an area of conflict.

Despite China's apparent convergence of interest with ASEAN over Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia view China as a long-term threat. Indonesia, which has yet to restore diplomatic ties with China, suffered from the Chinese inspired communist uprising in 1965. Indonesia continues to be apprehensive of China, particularly as she has a large overseas Chinese population. Malaysia has had a Communist insurgency since 1948. These insurgents draw their inspiration and support from China. It is common knowledge that the Communist Party of Malaysia's (CPM) leadership is located in Peking. In official talks between the Government of Malaysia and China, the Chinese have stated that the Government of China does not recognize the CPM, but it does not stop the Communist Party of China from making contact or providing assistance to the CPM. Malaysia also has a large overseas Chinese population.

#### THE UNITED STATES

The United States has a vital role to play for the continued stability of the Southeast Asia region. It is for this reason that the current US disengagement from the Nixon Doctrine is received with relief and joy by non-communist Southeast Asia. When the British left the area in 1971, they created a vacuum which the Soviets are quick to enter; and this situation was made worse when the US withdrew from Vietnam. However, today it is clear that there is a resurgence of interest in the area by the US. The important thing is that ASEAN and the US Government should take steps to win over US public opinion so that US interest in the area could be maintained.

ASEAN is wary of uncertain dependence on US support and presence in the area; and for that reason it has adopted the concept of a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality. ASEAN members have adopted foreign policies that will enable them to stand on their own feet. However, the presence of US

forces in the area stabilizes the status quo, vis-a-vis Russia and Vietnam, particularly with problems of claims to islands in the South China Sea. This presence is also vital for a feeling of security for foreign investors to Southeast Asia.

While the ASEAN nations are preoccupied with development, they still have to maintain a credible military force. Such a force is essential to maintain internal security in these countries. The US can provide meaningful support for this effort through guaranteed and orderly sales of hardware by the Foreign Military Sales program.

The US can support ASEAN's efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. This the US is now doing through international diplomatic forums, such as the United Nations and her contacts with the Soviets and China. The US has said that she will not provide any assistance to Vietnam unless Vietnam withdraws from Cambodia. The US can also use the same leverage to reduce the flow of refugees.

The long-term solution of the Vietnamese menace to Southeast Asia must be to reduce the Vietnamese dependence on the Soviet Union. To do this, the United States needs to take a more flexible attitude towards Hanoi. The current dialogue on the American MIA issue is an excellent start for future development for US-Vietnamese rapprochement.

The US can also provide a meaningful contribution to stability and development by encouraging more US investment in and greater access of ASEAN manufactured goods to the US market.

### THE SOVIET UNION

The Soviet presence in the region is a reality. It is not envisioned that there is likely to be any change to this for the near term. That being the case, her presence impacts upon the stability of Southeast Asia. However, the Soviet Union has still to prove herself to be a trustworthy partner. This being the case, the free countries of Southeast Asia take a standoff position with her despite the fact that trade with the Soviet Union has been increasing and generally favorable to the Southeast Asian states. This relationship is likely to continue as long as communist-inspired insurgencies continue to be an internal security problem for these states. The Soviet support and assistance to a belligerent and aggressive Vietnam also continues to be a source of problems in the relationship.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, can provide a beneficial contribution to Southeast Asian stability by restraining Vietnamese forces from attacking Thailand and, indeed, has sufficient influence to encourage Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia. The Soviets can create an atmosphere in which Vietnam can coexist with ASEAN. The Soviets should also not expand their conflict with China into the East Asia region; their recently expanded naval presence in Vietnam ports must increase Chinese apprehension.

In order that the ASEAN states do not get involved with major power rivalry, it is vital that they take a neutral stand on the Soviet Union.

### THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Recent changes in Chinese attitude, particularly in her leadership, give optimistic hope for future relationships between Southeast Asia and China. But for Southeast Asia to accept China, it is important that she demonstrates

sincerity in her dealings. First, there is a need for China to place greater importance on government-to-government relations and to stop the Chinese Communist Party from supporting communist underground parties in Southeast Asia.

China should adopt policies that reduce the level of tension and conflict in Indochina. She should refrain from acts and rhetorics that inflame further the tenuous situation. She should demonstrate that she is willing to adopt the rules of the game of the international community. Otherwise, she must realize that Southeast Asia will treat her with suspicion.

Most of the Southeast Asian countries have a large and economically prominent overseas Chinese population. For countries of Southeast Asia to feel comfortable with their relationship with China, they need to be reassured that China will not make any contacts with overseas Chinese to further her communist-expansionist aims. Such a situation did take place in Indonesia in the early 60's.

#### JAPAN

Japan is already playing a most vital role in the economy of Southeast Asia. However, there is an undercurrent of mistrust of Japan in Southeast Asia, because she has made profit-making too eminent an objective. Japan should help transfer Japanese work ethics and Japanese technology. A great deal of Southeast Asia is keen to learn the skills required for construction, automotive industry, and electronic technology. Japan has, on the other hand, been notoriously well-known for furthering her self-interest rather than in assisting these countries.

Japan has not played a useful role, despite her considerable influence, in bringing about a political solution to the Indochina problem. She should gradually increase her political involvement in the area and perform a greater mediating role in regional issues in Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asia will continue to be apprehensive of the Japanese defense buildup. But, with her SLOCs threatened, it is expected that in time Japan will assume greater responsibility for their security. Southeast Asia can accept this, if such buildup is gradually done and if Japan maintains close military relationships with the forces in Southeast Asia. Such close relationships can come about through Japan offering places for training courses, naval visits, and greater media exposure of the Japanese Self Defense Forces. In all of Japanese dealings, she needs to dispel fear that she is only in it for profit. The post war generation of Southeast Asia will be quick to forget Japanese war adventures, if Japan shows real sincerity and goodwill.

#### ASEAN MILITARY

Too often questions have been asked whether ASEAN will form a defense pact. On the surface, it would seem logical that, situated in an area of such turmoil and controlling strategic assets, ASEAN should agree on a military pact in the way the EEC and NATO are related. If an external threat can be perceived to be Vietnam, this paranoia for fear is shared by all the states. Similarly at varying degrees, there is also a common feeling of the threat from the USSR and China. But three major factors will dissuade such a possibility. First, despite the internal threats from insurgents in some of the countries, all the states feel strongly that economic development is of greater and paramount importance. Indeed, it is the success of economic,

social, and political development that will ensure a trouble-free state in the long term. They have experienced the problems of having to pay large external debts. Defense expenditure will not only be expensive but, in pure tangible economic terms, provide no returns. A military pact will incur expenditures because of the need to build a credible force for contributions towards the common objective. Most of these countries now maintain infantry-heavy counter-insurgency forces. ASEAN pact forces will have to be conventional-war credible, and this will require extremely high capital and maintenance outlays. Secondly, not all the countries feel that they have an external threat. Thailand may feel threatened, but her defense budget indicates no urgency for defense preparations at all. Thirdly, there are so many differences and suspicions still existing between the states that, for the time being, it is not conceivable that a defense pact would be agreeable. However, bilateral defense arrangements have been successful and are likely to continue. Such arrangements address current security problems which normally are located at common borders.

#### ANALYSIS

It can be seen from the above argument that, regardless of the stage of development or how much has been achieved, a vicious cycle of problems will continue to exist within these states with respect to internal security. The development brings about high aspirations which cannot be met by the governments. It is this constant aspiration gap that will result in continued internal security problems. In Southeast Asia, it is this situation that makes it vulnerable to external influence. In real terms, there is no external threat to Southeast Asia in the near future. Vietnam is not likely

to invade Thailand. The Soviets have never overtly done anything to threaten the security of Southeast Asia. The Chinese, though menacing, have not been a direct security threat.

#### THE FUTURE

The internal security problems of Southeast Asia are likely to continue in varying measures from one state to another. In the Philippines, the problems have resulted in a major upheaval, which at the time of writing seems favorable to the democracies. But such crisis will not always end like the Philippines. The Communists are always waiting for a chance to exploit any situation. In all the free countries of Southeast Asia there are Communist forces in legal political parties or underground groups waiting for an opportunity. This situation can only be corrected when there is socio-economic parity between Southeast Asia and the developed West. It is a distant hope, but these are the aspirations of the people. Many will say that a major factor in local dissatisfaction is agrarian injustice; but, even if there is a major land reform, the needs of the people cannot be satisfied when they know others live better than they do. A Thai farmer wants to own a car much more than he wants to get his children to school. Will their aspirations disappear if they achieve socio-economic wellness? It is not likely that it will be so, but it will narrow the aspiration gap, and there is little for the communists to subvert the people. There will be no cause for the insurgent to fight for.

Unfortunately, this objective cannot be easily achieved because of the very socio-economic, political, vicious cycle we described earlier. First, it needs a good and stable government. Goodness here refers to a clean, efficient, and trustworthy government. It needs a high level of education and

a population that has all the skills required for a technologically sophisticated society. It needs the development of infrastructure so that rural and urban populations can enjoy the same benefits. It needs the development of a large middle class. It needs discipline, national unity, and national pride. But most of all, it needs money and time—time that is undistracted from internal and external security problems. It is believed that the only "force" that can provide this time is the United States. It can do this because:

1. The US can keep great power rivalry from interfering with the internal development of these countries. It is felt that the US has the wherewithal and the influence to do this.
2. The US can provide the academic and other technological training either through assistance within these countries or in the United States. This will cultivate a large population base that will be sympathetic to the US in the long term.
3. The US can provide economical and technological assistance so that these countries can accelerate and meet their development goals.
4. US military presence in the area will reduce the need for these countries to maintain high cost, conventional forces, which are unlikely to fight a war. If they have to fight against Vietnam or China, they are not likely to have strong enough forces to defeat these aggressors anyhow. A strong military force has a tendency to destabilize the internal political situation by virtue of its inherent power.
5. The US can provide access to manufactured products by fair trade practices and not necessarily preferential treatment.

The question is, Why the United States and not the Soviet Union or China? Why should the US taxpayer take this burden for an area that is halfway around the globe from US shores? First, if these same roles are to be played by either the Soviet Union or China, it will not take long before the whole of Southeast Asia turns communist. The people of Southeast Asia do not want this, but their present state of development being what it is, it is conceivable that they will be resigned to the idea and accept this change. No

doubt many will take to the hills and many more will migrate elsewhere or become refugees; but, in time, the communist system will be entrenched. Secondly, it is cheaper for the US to assist, as suggested above, in the long term. Indeed, it may be possible in the future to reduce US military commitment in the western Pacific area. It is also true that successful Southeast Asian democracies will be a socio-economic and political threat to their communist neighbors by virtue of their success.

#### CONCLUSION

The economic successes by Southeast Asian states in the last 15 years are an indication of their determination to develop their countries. Better results can be achieved; this requires peace and stability. It is for this reason that in Southeast Asia, more than anywhere else, this is so highly prized.

The paper discusses the point that in Southeast Asia, it is the breakdown in internal security that makes it vulnerable to external threats. In fact, there is no external threat unless one postulates on scenarios. The internal security situation is threatened by the repercussions of development, particularly when each of these countries finds it difficult to unite the people due to their ethnic and social differences. These countries have also not achieved political maturity and face problems in the succession of power. Most countries do not have an efficient civil service that will provide the continuity. An internally insecure state becomes vulnerable to an external power and, thus, draws in the external threat.

These countries do not wish to align themselves to any super power as this will only bring about greater super-power rivalry. Such rivalries will destabilize the external environment. The United States, however, is seen as

the only power capable of making a meaningful contribution towards the peaceful development of Southeast Asia. A developed Southeast Asia can, in the long term, assume the military responsibilities that are now undertaken by the United States.

The ingredients for successful development of Southeast Asia are good government, a trained and skilled working class, high standards of education, and a large middle class. These are objectives that can be achieved, given the right conditions. A developed Southeast Asia will minimize its internal security problems and will, indeed, have a favorable influence on the communist states in the region.

The paper feels that the US, USSR, China, and Japan have positive roles they can play in the development of Southeast Asia. The USSR has a most influential position in settling the Cambodian issue and getting Vietnam to live in goodwill with its neighbors. China needs to reassure Southeast Asia that she is not a threat. Japan should contribute in large measure in developing the trained and skilled manpower of Southeast Asia. It is possible for Southeast Asia to accept a wider role of the Japanese Defense Forces, if this is done gradually and a better understanding of her intentions is known. She should also maintain a close working relationship with the defense forces of Southeast Asia.

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